



Timeline of Racism in the United States
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1493: The Doctrine of Discovery is an international law that was created to legitimize land colonization outside of Europe and effectively gave Spain a monopoly on the lands in the New World. The law stated that upon "discovery" Native peoples had lost "their rights to complete sovereignty, as independent nations," and only retained a right of "occupancy" in their lands.

1607: The Jamestown Colony is the creation of the first permanent British settlement in the Americas. The land that was colonized was called Tsenacommacah by the Paspahegh tribe who were part of the Powhatan Confederacy. Despite initially being dependent on the Paspahegh people for survival, the British completely annihilated the Paspahegh within 3 years through warfare and infectious disease.

1619: The Beginning of the US Slave Trade where African slaves were first brought to Jamestown Virginia in 1619 after being captured from a Spanish slave ship by Dutch traders. 350,000 enslaved people were imported into the Thirteen Colonies and the U.S. The United States could not have developed economically as a nation, in large part through the tobacco and cotton industries, without enslaved African labor.

1676: Bacon's Rebellion was an armed rebellion where more than 1,000 Virginians of all races and classes rose up in arms against the governor of Jamestown VA due to the subordination they faced by the aristocratic government, high taxes, and voting restrictions. Jamestown was burnt to the ground. The strong alliance between white indentured servants and Black slaves rising up against their conditions was terrifying to the ruling class, who responded by hardening the racial caste system of slavery in order to divide the people and prevent further uprisings.

1705: Virginia Slave Codes solidified white supremacy into law. The law differentiated treatment of white servants and Black slaves, equating the terms “Negro” and “slave”, imposing harsh physical punishments or murder only for Black people, establishing separate courts for whites and Blacks, prohibiting Blacks from owning arms, establishing new property rights for slave owners, and more. White servants were now allowed to acquire land, join militias, carry guns and other rights not afforded to slaves.

1779: Clinton-Sullivan Expedition was a military campaign during the Revolutionary War which had the goal of defeating the Loyalists and destroying the 6 nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. General John Sullivan carried out a scorched earth campaign throughout the Finger Lakes region, methodically destroying over 40 Haudenosaunee villages and almost all of their crops and winter storage food.

1790: Naturalization Act of 1790; Citizenship is restricted to free Whites

1793: Invention of the Cotton Gin allowed southern cotton plantations to grow rapidly, increasing the demand for slave labor and solidifying slavery as a cornerstone of the US and global economy.

1819: Civilization Act of 1819 passed by congress to assimilate Native Americans. This law provided U.S. government funds to subsidize Protestant missionary educators in order to convert Native Americans to Christianity.

1823: The Christian Doctrine of Discovery was quietly adopted into U.S. law by the Supreme Court in the celebrated case, *Johnson v. McIntosh*. Christian European nations had assumed "ultimate dominion" over the lands of America during the Age of Discovery, and that - upon "discovery" - the Indians had lost "their rights to complete sovereignty, as independent nations," and only retained a right of "occupancy" in their lands. The United States - upon winning its independence in 1776 - became a successor nation to the right of "discovery" and acquired the power of "dominion" from Great Britain.

1824: U.S. Establishes Office of Indian Affairs in War Department, which puts in place the bureaucracy that will administer the nation's "manifest destiny" objectives—the idea that expansion to the Pacific is the young nation's right. The government will make treaties with American Indian tribes as the U.S. military defeats them, after which the tribes will be moved to reservations.

1830: Indian Removal Act, May 28th is a law signed by President Andrew Jackson that forced Southern tribes, including the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee-Creek, Seminole, and original Cherokee Nations to relocate west of the Mississippi in order to use their ancestral homelands in the Southeast to expand the cotton industry. By 1837 46,000 Native American people were removed from their land east of the Mississippi, opening 25 million acres of land to white settlement and to slavery. It led to the Trail of Tears in 1838, the forced and brutal migration of the Cherokee Nation to Oklahoma.

1845: The term "manifest destiny" was first used by journalist John O'Sullivan who wrote in favor of the U.S. annexing Texas. In simple terms, Manifest Destiny was the idea that Americans were destined, by God, to govern the North American continent. This idea, with all the accompanying transformations of landscape, culture, and religious belief it implied, had deep roots in American culture. Like Americans before 1845, we may not use the specific words "Manifest Destiny" to describe the belief that America has a unique destiny in the world, but the concept is still at the heart of much U.S. foreign policy, American pop culture, and contemporary political debate.

1845-1848: Mexican American War & Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the brutal and devastating Mexican-American War in favor of the United States. It added an additional 525,000 square miles to United States territory, including the land that makes up all or parts of present-day Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Utah and Wyoming. The war and the takeover of Mexico's land were conducted under the assumption of Manifest Destiny, the idea that the U.S. had the natural right to rule North America from coast to coast and bring Protestant Christianity to "backward" regions.

1850: The Foreign Miners Tax, passed by California legislators, which requires Chinese and Latin American gold miners to pay a special tax on their holdings, a tax not required of European American miners. Congress passes the Fugitive Slave Law allowing federal marshals to capture runaway slaves and enlist the assistance of other Whites; also makes it possible for a black person to be captured as a slave solely on the sworn statement of a white person with no right to challenge the claim in court.

1855: California requires all instruction to be conducted in English.

1857: Dred Scott Decision, Scott was an enslaved black man who sued his owners for his own freedom. Scott's suit had basis in existing law, which prohibited slavery in free states, including cases where enslaved blacks traveled to free states for their owner's business. The supreme court ultimately ruled that blacks whose ancestors were brought to the US and/or sold as slaves were not US citizens and did not have the legal rights, including the right to sue for one's own freedom. The case is viewed as an indirect cause of the civil war.

1860: Creation of the first Native American Boarding School In the United States were developed to forcibly assimilate Native peoples into Euro-American culture, English language speaking, and Protestant Christianity. Schools forced native children to cut their hair, wear Euro-American clothing, speak english, adopt western cultural and family structures, and prohibited contact with their families and communities. The Carlisle Industrial Indian Boarding School, created in 1879, is famous for its founder's motto "kill the Indian, save the man." In 1978 Indigenous parents gained the legal right to deny their children's placement in off-reservation schools.

1862: President Lincoln signs Homestead Act allotting 160 acres of western land — Native American land — to "anyone" who could pay \$1.25 and cultivate it for five years. European immigrants and land speculators bought 50 million acres. Congress gave another 100 million acres of Indian land free to the railroads. Since the Homestead Act applied only to U.S. citizens, Native Americans, Blacks and non-European immigrants were excluded.

1864: Ratification of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolishing slavery. The U.S. army massacres 300 Cheyenne Indians in the Sand Creek Massacre.

1870: Naturalization Act of 1870 revises the Naturalization Act of 1790 and the 14th Amendment so that naturalization is limited to white persons and persons of African descent, effectively excluding Chinese and other Asian immigrants from naturalization. Texas law requires English as the language of school instruction.

1882: The Chinese Exclusion Act is a United States federal law signed by President Chester A. Arthur that prohibited immigration of all Chinese laborers. It was the first law implemented to prevent a specific ethnic group from immigrating to the United States. The act also led to heavy policing of the US-Mexico border in an attempt to prevent Chinese Laborers in Mexico from immigrating to the US. The act was repealed in 1943.

1883: Supreme Court strikes down 1875 Civil Rights Act and reinforces claim that the federal government cannot regulate behavior of private individuals in matters of race relations.

1887: Dawes Act dissolves tribal lands, granting land allotments to individual families leading to division of Indian territory and encroachment by Whites on Indian land. This act explicitly prohibits communal land ownership. The Supreme Court decides in favor of the Maxwell Company, a division of the Santa Fe Ring, allocating millions of acres of Mexican and Indian land in New Mexico to the Anglo corporation.

1898: The Treaty of Paris, an agreement negotiated on terms favorable to the US which allowed it temporary control of Cuba and ceded ownership of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine islands. The cession of the Philippines involved payment of \$20 million (\$569,840,000 today) to Spain by the US to cover infrastructure owned by Spain. The Treaty of Paris marked the end of the Spanish Empire (apart from some small holdings in North Africa). It marked the beginning of the age of the United States as a world power.

1900: The Foraker Act, passed by congress, establishing a colonial government in Puerto Rico and stipulating both the governor and executive council be appointed by the U.S.

1901: U.S. citizenship granted to the Five Civilized Tribes — Cherokee, Choctaw, Seminole, Creek, Chickasaw.

1904: Station for Experimental Evolution, Cold Spring NY - Racist pseudo-science of eugenics that led to the development in 1910 of the Eugenics Record Office. There, bigoted scientists applied rudimentary genetics to singling out supposedly superior races and degrading minorities. By the mid-1920s, the office had become the center of the eugenics movement in America and turned into a monstrous enterprise that helped advocate anti-immigration laws and apply such things as forced sterilization and mass extermination of “defectives” or people of “inferior blood.” Congress complied. The Immigration Act of 1924 effectively barred Eastern Europeans, Jews, Arabs and East Asians from entering the country. This work in the “science of racial cleansing,” influenced Nazi ideology throughout WWII & the Holocaust.”

1910: The Great Migration was a mass movement between the years of 1910 - 1970 of six million southern blacks in the primarily rural, southern US states to primarily urban areas of the northern, midwestern and western states to escape the oppressive social and economic conditions in the Jim Crow South. The migration was also a reaction to southern racist terrorism; during the overlapping period of 1882-1968, over 3,500 lynchings took place.

1923: Japanese businessman Takao Ozawa petitions the Supreme Court for naturalization, arguing that his skin is as white, if not whiter than any so-called Caucasian. The Court rules that Ozawa cannot be a citizen because he is not “white” within the meaning of the statute, asserting that the best known science of the time defined Ozawa as of the Mongolian race. In *U.S. v Bhagat Singh Thind*, the U.S. Supreme Court recognizes that Indians are “scientifically” classified as Caucasians but concludes that they are not white in popular (white) understanding, thus reversing the logic used in the Ozawa case. The lawyers for the United States attacked Thind’s “meltability” by defining Hinduism as an alien and barbaric system and not fit for membership in the “civilization of white men.”

1924: The Immigration Act of 1924 limited the number of immigrants allowed entry into the United States through a national origins quota. The quota provided immigration visas to two percent of the total number of people of each nationality in the United States as of the 1890 national census. It completely excluded immigrants from Asia.

1930–1940: U.S. deports 600,000 Mexicans, many of whom are U.S. citizens. 130,000 Arabs present in the United States. 1935: California law declares Mexican Americans are foreign-born Indians.

1942 - 1945: Japanese Internment Camps FDR signs Executive Order 9066, ordering the evacuation and mass incarceration of 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast, 62% of whom were US citizens, during World War II. Camps lacked adequate housing, plumbing, and healthcare and were often located in harsh desert climates in the mid and south west. Those who were interned also lost property and employment, which compounded the impact of existing US laws that prohibited people of Japanese ancestry from owning land and businesses. The term “Internment Camp” has been criticized as a euphemism for Concentration Camp. The Bracero Program invites Mexican workers to work temporarily in the U.S. during the war period where they develop the U.S. agricultural industry. Later they are sent home without the promised pay due to them.

1938 - 1968: Redlining in Federal Housing. The United States created the Federal Housing Administration. The FHA’s charge was to make homeownership accessible to whites while explicitly denying homeownership to blacks through the process of redlining. Redlining color-coded neighborhoods based on the racial and ethnic makeup of an area, offering favorable loans to white neighborhoods (green and blue) and denying loans in black, multiracial, and non-white neighborhoods (red). Redlining was as a official government policy ended in 1968 but continues today as banks and government housing agencies disproportionately deny loans to people of color.

1971- Present: Mass Incarceration and The Drug War. Mass Incarceration refers to the imprisonment of poor people of color, specifically blacks and latinos, for minor, non-violent drug crimes at rates disproportionate to their use of drugs, which are consistent across race. In 1971, in the wake of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, Richard Nixon declared The War on Drugs, which evolved the term “criminal” into a synonym for poor people of color, thus justifying incarceration. The US currently incarcerates 2 million people and holds nearly 5 million people on parole.

1986: The Immigration Reform and Control Act criminalizes the employment of undocumented workers; establishes one-year amnesty for undocumented workers living in the U.S. since 1982; and mandates intensification of the Border Patrol.

1994/2004 - 2018: NAFTA/CAFTA. The North American Free Trade Act, signed between the US, Canada and Mexico, and the Central American Free Trade Act, signed between the US, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, are two trade deals that have significantly benefited the US, Canada and US corporations at the expense of farmers, laborers, and small and mid-sized business owners in Mexico and Central America. In Mexico, NAFTA has driven over 2.5 million people out of work; at the same time, undocumented migration from Mexico to the US has doubled from 2.9 million people to 5.9 million people. The effects of CAFTA, as well as similar Free Trade Agreements (FTA's) in Colombia, Panama and Korea, follow the same course as NAFTA.

2001: The U.S.A. PATRIOT Act is passed by Congress with virtually no debate, giving the federal government the power to detain suspected “terrorists” for an unlimited time period without access to legal representation. Over 1000 Arab, Muslim, and South Asian men are detained in secret locations.